

Message Text

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14
ACTION OES-06

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TBIO, SWEL, JA, US
SUBJECT: GOJ HEALTH AND WELFARE MINISTRY TO SEND DOCTORS TO
U.S. TO ASSIST ATOMIC BOMB VICTIMS' ENTRY INTO JAPAN
FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT

REF: TOKYO 13014

1. DURING COURSE OF RERF SCIENTIFIC COUNCILLORS MEETING IN HIROSHIMA, DR. SABURI OF MHW HELD INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH WEYZEN, JABLON, AND BLOOM ON MATTER OF SENDING JAPANESE PHYSICIANS TO U.S. FOR EXAMINATION OF A-BOMB SURVIVORS THERE. AS CONSEQUENCE, GOJ POSITION IN MATTER IS NOW MUCH MORE CLEAR IN SOME RESPECTS, BUT OTHER ASPECTS ARE STILL HAZY. ANOTHER MEETING WILL BE HELD IN TOKYO WITH SABURI ON SEPTEMBER 9.

2. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, SABURI GAVE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

A. GOJ IS PREPARED TO SEND JAPANESE DOCTORS TO U.S. TO
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ASSIST IN EXAMINATION OF A-BOMB SURVIVORS. PLAN IS TO ENLIST

SUPPORT OF LICENSED U.S. PHYSICIANS, WHO WOULD ACTUALLY CONDUCT EXAMINATIONS, BUT UNDER GUIDANCE OF JAPANESE DOCTORS. THIS PLAN ASSUMES THAT AGREEMENT OF USG WILL BE OBTAINED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS AND THAT THE APPROVAL OF THE INDIVIDUAL STATES INVOLVED (WE BELIEVE CALIFORNIA, WASHINGTON, AND HAWAII) WILL BE OBTAINED IF NECESSARY BY DIRECT APPROACHES TO THE STATES.

B. ANY U.S. RESIDENTS DIAGNOSED AS SUFFERING FROM "A-BOMB DISEASE" WOULD BE BROUGHT TO JAPAN FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION AND POSSIBLE TREATMENT BY DOCTORS IN HIROSHIMA OR NAGASAKI IF PATIENTS SO DESIRE.

C. GOJ INVOLVEMENT IN THIS IS PREDICATED ON SEVERAL FACTORS: (1) SURVIVORS IN U.S. CLAIM THAT U.S. DOCTORS ARE INSENSITIVE TO THEIR SPECIAL NEEDS; (2) MEDICAL CARE IS NOT AVAILABLE TO ALL OF THEM; (3) GOJ HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO ALL A-BOMB SURVIVORS BECAUSE NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS WHICH ENDED WW II FOR JAPAN RESULTED IN THE SAVING OF MANY LIVES THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN OTHERWISE LOST BY AN INVASION OF JAPANESE MAIN ISLANDS. THUS MANY JAPANESE ALIVE TODAY OWE SOMETHING TO THOSE WHO WERE EXPOSED TO THE NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS.

D. ALTHOUGH GOJ IS PREPARED TO BEAR ALL COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS EFFORT, COOPERATION--INCLUDING FINANCIAL--WILL BE SOUGHT FROM USG. GOJ FUNDING IS TO COME FROM SPECIAL CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT OF MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELFARE, WITH APPROVAL OF MINISTRY OF FINANCE.

3. WHEN PRESSED FURTHER, SABURI READILY ADMITTED THAT QUALITY OF MEDICAL CARE AVAILABLE TO SURVIVORS IN JAPAN IS NOT SUPERIOR TO THAT IN U.S., BUT THAT SURVIVORS IN U.S. DO NOT SEE IT THIS WAY. THEY LOOK UPON "A-BOMB DISEASE" AS A PECULIAR MEDICAL MANIFESTATION WITH WHICH U.S. DOCTORS HAVE NO EXPERIENCE. THUS PROBLEM IS LARGELY A PSYCHOLOGICAL ONE WITH THE SURVIVORS.

4. NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IS QUITE UNCERTAIN. MRS. SUEISHI CLAIMS THAT ABOUT 1,000 INDIVIDUALS WILL SEEK EXAMINATION AND TREATMENT. SABURI BELIEVES NUMBER IS CLOSER TO 300, AND THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF THESE ONLY A SMALL FRACTION DO NOT HAVE MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND TREATMENT ALREADY AVAILABLE TO THEM. FURTHERMORE, OF THOSE POSTULATED TO BE EXAMINED IN U.S., SOME WILL NOT WANT TO COME TO JAPAN FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION OR TREATMENT OR WILL NOT REQUIRE THE TRIP.

5. WHILE STRESSING THAT NO GUIDANCE HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM USG ON MATTER, U.S. REPS STATED PERSONAL OPINION THAT USG WOULD

BE RELUCTANT TO PARTICIPATE FINANCIALLY IN PROGRAM. (FAILURE OF LEGISLATION TO THIS GENERAL EFFECT TO PASS IN EITHER STATE OR FEDERAL LEGISLATURES FORMED BACKGROUND FOR THIS OPINION). ONE U.S. REP SUGGESTED THAT GOJ MIGHT WISH TO EXAMINE POSSIBILITY OF GOJ FUNDING TREATMENT IN U.S. MEDICAL FACILITIES BY ENROLLING ANY SURVIVORS NOT NOW IN A HEALTH PLAN IN A PLAN THAT HAS ACCESS TO PHYSICIANS EXPERT IN EFFECTS OF RADIATION ON HUMANS. HE CITED KAISER FOUNDATION IN LOS ANGELES AS POSSIBILITY.

6. SABURI ALSO STATED THAT MHW WAS RELYING TO SOME EXTENT ON STUDY OF A-BOMB SURVIVORS IN U.S. MADE BY MR. YAMADA, A SHIELDING TECHNICIAN WHO SPENT A YEAR AT ORNL TRYING TO DETERMINE RADIATION DOSES EXPERIENCED BY SURVIVORS. ERDA, NAS, AND EMBASSY OFFICIALS RESPONDED THAT THEY HAD NOT SEEN THE YAMADA STUDY.

7. FYI: ON DAY FOLLOWING DISCUSSION REPORTED ABOVE, MRS. SUEISHI WAS OBSERVED TO BE PRESENT AT THE RERF DINING ROOM DURING LUNCH, WHERE SHE HELD A DISCUSSION WITH DR. SABURI AND PRESENTED HIM WITH A DOCUMENT WRITTEN IN JAPANESE. DR. SABURI LEFT FOR TOKYO IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER AND THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DISCUSSION IS UNKNOWN. SHE ALSO MET WITH DR. FINCH IN THE AFTERNOON. FINCH REPORTS THAT SHE ASKED FOR HIS PERSONAL SUPPORT OF PROGRAM AND FOR SUGGESTIONS ON HOW IT COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED SUCCESSFULLY. HE EXPRESSED DOUBTS TO HER THAT USG WOULD BE INTERESTED IN BECOMING INVOLVED AND SUGGESTED THAT SHE CALL ON DOCTORS' GROUPS AND OTHER PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS IN U.S. SHE ALSO TOLD HIM THAT SHE ESTIMATES THAT THERE ARE 300 SURVIVORS IN HONOLULU ALONE, BUT THAT THEY WILL NOT ADMIT TO BEING SO. SHE CHARACTERIZED SURVIVORS AS HAVING PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS. MRS. SUEISHI MENTIONED YAMADA STUDY TO DR. FINCH, AND SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN PRINTED AS AEC REPORT.

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ALTHOUGH IT WAS NOT GENERALLY AVAILABLE, SHE HAD MANAGED TO OBTAIN COPY OF REPORT. IT GAVE HER CONCERN BECAUSE YAMADA HAD APPARENTLY FOUND THAT ONLY 12 SURVIVORS IN U.S. HAD RECEIVED PROXIMAL EXPOSURE TO BOMB RADIATION.

8. IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE USG REACTION TO THIS MESSAGE AND TO REFTEL PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 9 TOKYO TIME, SO THAT USG VIEWS CAN BE EXPRESSED TO SABURI.

SHOESMITH

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